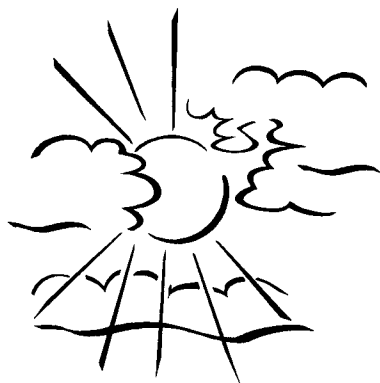


***Department
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Articles in Today's Clips

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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Two face charges in sex case Couple accused of child abuse and producing, distributing pornography

By CHRIS MACKINDER
Port Huron Times Herald

A Port Huron couple is expected to be arraigned today on charges they sexually abused two children.

The 39-year-old male and 24-year-old female were arrested late Monday afternoon for the manufacturing and distribution of child pornography and child sexual abuse.

The couple had been under investigation by the Port Huron Police Special Victims Unit and the Marysville Police Department.

Port Huron police raided the home in the 3900 block of Military Street about 4:15 p.m.

Detectives found evidence in the ongoing investigation that at least two children younger than 9 years old had been sexually abused by the couple.

Port Huron police Lt. James Jones said the children were not related to the suspects but were the children of acquaintances.

"We believe they used sexual paraphernalia on the victims, and that was confiscated," Jones said.

Other evidence found included computer equipment and paraphernalia used to manufacture and distribute child pornography.

"The investigation was relatively new," Jones said. "We believe the acts of child pornography and distribution had taken place over a period of months. The abuse on the victims looks fairly recent."

Tim Buelow, Marysville Police Department assistant chief, assisted in the investigation because of his training in computer forensics.

Buelow said he wasn't a part of Monday's raid but received a phone call Monday night.

Jones said Buelow advised Port Huron police as they worked to secure computer evidence.

Jones said the department will have a warrant request - on multiple felony counts - sent to

prosecutors today.

Both subjects are in the St. Clair County jail. They were to be arraigned this afternoon.

Contact Chris Mackinder at (810) 989-6273 or cmackinder@gannett.com.

Originally published May 17, 2006

Man guilty of 1992 rape of 6-year-old boy

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

By John Agar
The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- Fighting DNA evidence, Curtis Baker on Tuesday disputed allegations he broke into an apartment in 1992 and raped a 6-year-old boy.

Baker insisted he was "railroaded" by the justice system.

"I don't have to rape no little boy."

A jury didn't believe him. Baker, 39, was found guilty of first-degree sexual assault.

He faces up to life in prison when sentenced June 21 by Kent County Circuit Judge George Buth, who presided over the jury trial.

Assistant Prosecutor Jay Stone said DNA tests showed "after all these years, from 1992 to 2006, that you can run, you can hide, but you can't escape what you did."

Baker avoided arrest until 2004, when state police sent DNA samples from cold cases for analysis by a private, out-of-state lab that used procedures not available in Michigan when the crime occurred.

Stone said DNA evidence left no doubt Baker was guilty. During closing arguments, he ridiculed Baker's contention that he was victimized by the justice system, particularly after he was convicted in 1996 of assault with intent to rape a woman.

"The only question, the only question remaining: Is poor Mr. Baker ... the victim of conspiracy, or is he the guilty party?"

Defense attorney Brett Stevenson argued the private company that did the DNA analysis had problems, and that improper handling or labeling evidence could have led to a wrong identification.

He acknowledged his client didn't warrant sympathy, but urged jurors to look at evidence, not just the horror of a little boy being raped by an intruder in the middle of the night while he slept in his bedroom.

Stevenson also noted that the victim identified his attacker as white or Hispanic. Baker is black.

"He's not a nice guy; you don't have to like him. But you have to give him a fair trial, and not let your emotions get away from you."

Jurors took less than two hours to convict.

Baker spent most of the trial in a room outside the courtroom. He said he didn't want to participate until he decided to testify.

In one of several exchanges between the prosecutor and defendant, Stone demanded: "Tell the jury how your sperm, your DNA, got in that little boy."

A little later, Baker said, "You know how people, innocent people, go to jail for coerced testimony?"

"You're not one of them," Stone said.

Send e-mail to the author: jagar@grpress.com

Child agency to host annual awards dinner

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

BURTON

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

By Kristin Longley

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The Consortium on Child Abuse and Neglect will hold its annual awards dinner May 24 at the Brookwood Banquet Center, 6045 Davison Road.

The event begins at 6 p.m., with dinner at 6:30 p.m. and the program at 7 p.m. The buffet dinner is \$30. Entertainment will be provided.

The keynote speaker is Dr. Edwin H. Gullekson, vice president of medical affairs and medical director of the Child Evaluation Center at McLaren Regional Medical

Center.

Reservations can be made until Monday.

Details: (810) 234-3680, or e-mail ccan7160@sbcglobal.net.

5/17/2006 11:00:00 AM

County is home to 6,500 uninsured residents

BY TERRY KATZ
STURGIS JOURNAL

People who do not have health insurance usually wait until the last minute to seek help. By the time they are treated in an emergency room, serious health problems that could have been avoided cost more to treat.

That's one problem local hospitals face almost daily.

According to recent statistics, 6,500 people are without health insurance in St. Joseph County. Of that total, 1,500 are children.

The St. Joseph County Human Services Commission's Access to Health Care Task Force recently met at Glen Oaks Community College to review progress and talk about gaps in the health care system for the uninsured.

Duke Anderson, chairperson, said, "Something else worth noting is that there are 11,000 people on Medicare in St. Joseph County out of 62,000 people who live here," Anderson said.

He said that the task force is looking for ways to provide basic dental care to the uninsured.

Matt Chambers, CEO of Three Rivers Health, had a few words to share about Riverside Clinic in the absence of Christy Hensell.

"In 2005, through grants and other sources, they were able to provide \$430,000 in medications to patients. They see an average of 150 patients a month and the number continues to grow."

Chambers said improvements continue to be made at Three Rivers Health.

"We've added bilingual signs for Latinos," he said. "We're hiring bilingual providers. We are working to educate women about breast cancer. Our bereavement and grief support group reaches out to people throughout the county. There's been a decrease in teen pregnancies and part of this we believe is because of education strategies."

The amount of charity care at Three Rivers Health and Sturgis Hospital is staggering. Charity care at Three Rivers Health in 2004 reached \$3.27 million, while free care at Sturgis Hospital was up to \$2.8 million.

"The real issue to me," said Robert LaBarge, Sturgis Hospital CEO, "is how long can we

continue to absorb these costs?”

In an effort to help uninsured families, Chamber said plans are under way to set up a model clinic in Three Rivers Schools in the fall. It will be staffed by a nurse practitioner and social worker. He said the experiment of having small health clinics in schools may take a few years to get off the ground but may help some families receive basic health care.

With 80 percent of the uninsured people in Michigan coming from working families, State Rep. Rick Shaffer said, “We have a high number of people who for no fault of their own cannot afford health care in the community. They deserve to have health care. It’s our civic duty to help them.”

The luncheon was held in support of Cover the Uninsured Week.

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

Help seniors, extend drug benefit deadline

Michigan senior citizens who face penalties for not signing up for the government's convoluted Medicare drug coverage plan shouldn't let that stop them from enrolling.

There's significant movement in Congress to extend the time people can sign up without being charged more for missing Monday's deadline. That's a logical and appropriate action considering that the system was so complicated it took an army of volunteers and government workers to sort it all out.

More than 27 million Americans enrolled in the prescription drug program, according to the House Ways and Means Committee, but plenty more are eligible, including thousands in Michigan. Extending the deadline will encourage the stragglers to sign up.

Precedent for extending the deadline already has been set as it was pushed back to allow poor Medicare beneficiaries more time to enroll. Similar treatment is warranted for all recipients.

Without changes to the law, those who missed the deadline will pay higher premiums and not get drug coverage until January. They'll pay a 1 percent penalty per month until they choose a plan and that penalty will be applied as long as they have Medicare coverage.

Those who sign up today, for example, will pay a 7 percent penalty (since they can't get enrolled until Nov. 15) and the amount will be based on the national average premium for that year, which is estimated to be about \$2.50 a month for 2006. Confused?

The longer someone waits to sign up, the more they'll pay in penalties.

There certainly is benefit to having and enforcing deadlines, and millions adhered to the government's first cut. But considering how confusing the system is for arguably one of the most vulnerable groups of Americans, Congress should act swiftly to extend that deadline.

That gives people incentive to sign up but still puts an end date on the system and imposes a penalty on those who don't take advantage of a longer enrollment window.

DETROIT FREE PRESS EDITORIAL

Medicare Mess

People should not face penalty for missing deadline

May 17, 2006

Now that the deadline has passed to sign up for a Medicare prescription-drug plan, federal officials should eliminate the penalty for those who didn't do it if they decide to opt in at the next opportunity. If the program is indeed worthwhile, enrollment should be encouraged, not discouraged.

The deadline should have been extended and the penalty dropped long ago. But the program works better as more people enroll, and the Bush administration didn't want to give elderly and disabled people an excuse to not meet the May 15 deadline. Enrollment doesn't open again until November, with higher premiums that would add about \$30 to the cost of drugs each year.

Meantime, many states dropped programs to help older, low-income people pay for drugs. Michigan, at least, continued dual coverage at the beginning of the year and retains its prescription-drug discount card, but that's still not a comprehensive federal policy. Congress and the White House should allow for sign-ups without penalty when enrollment reopens in November.

Aiding former fosters

Editor, The Saginaw News:

Erin Alberty's story on Anthony Lewis ("Still Searching for Home," May 7) is a perfect illustration of why we as a society need to devote more resources to helping young people who are "aging out" of foster care at 18.

Every year in Michigan, 1,800 young people leave the foster care system and are forced to fend for themselves. Most of these children already have been traumatized by abuse and neglect. As Anthony himself noted, they have no positive role models to follow.

Former foster children are at very high risk not only for homelessness but also for prison and unwed parenthood.

A small investment in these youths can pay huge dividends. Lutheran Social Services of Michigan and other child welfare agencies are expanding their programs for youths leaving foster care.

Youth independent living programs offer the counseling and training that can help these young people make it as adults. We provide the "nagging" that Anthony realizes he needed so much: Keep yourself clean and healthy, get to work on time, be respectful of others, save your money and pay your bills, learn marketable skills.

I pray that the resources and mentoring Anthony needs will be there so that he can experience success and mature into a healthy, productive man.

Mark Stutrud

president,

Lutheran Social Services of Michigan

Detroit

State police accuse driver of wife-beating on U.S. 23

POLICE BLOTTER

HARTLAND TOWNSHIP

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

By Bryn Mickle

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

A Flint woman was choked and beaten by her estranged husband along southbound U.S. 23 on Tuesday afternoon, state police said.

Troopers from the Brighton post tried to pull over the husband's minivan about noon after 911 calls about the man.

He allegedly refused orders to get out of the van then nearly struck troopers as he drove off on U.S. 23.

Police used stop sticks to stop the van in Green Oak Township, but troopers said the man climbed in the back of the van and grabbed the woman.

When he refused to surrender, troopers shot him with a stun gun.

The woman, 39, was treated at the scene for injuries from the assault.

The suspect, 37, lives in North Carolina and is being held in the Livingston County Jail pending arraignment on charges of attempted murder, abduction, felonious assault with a motor vehicle and resisting and obstructing police.

Published May 17, 2006

Camp Highfields names new interim president

By Stacey Range
Lansing State Journal

The beleaguered Camp Highfields in rural Ingham County has named another new interim president - the second to lead the youth facility since firing its CEO in March.

Larry Miesner, who teaches criminal justice at Michigan State University and formerly served as Chief of Michigan's Bureau of Juvenile Justice, will be charged with securing the center's state license and reopening its residential program.

"I'm realistic this is going to be a challenge," Miesner said. "But with the backing of the board and staff at Highfields now we'll be up and running with the residential program that the community deserves."

The Onondaga-based home for juvenile offenders closed its residential program in February when the state and Ingham County judges pulled 33 youths from it after allegations of abuse surfaced.

The state this month began proceedings to revoke the facility's license unless administrators develop a suitable corrective action plan addressing safety, communication and staff training.

Keith Groty, chairman of the Highfields' board of directors, said hiring Miesner is the first step of that plan.

The directors named Miesner, who also is director of strategic and effective practices for the National Partnership for Juvenile Services, to the post Monday. His four-month contract will begin June 1. Groty would not disclose the amount of the contract.

Miesner replaces Greg Pincumbe, who was named interim president on March 30, three days after the board dismissed president and chief executive officer Jim Hines. Groty said Pincumbe will return to his position as director of support services.

Miesner also will have to replace Yussaf Abdullah, who directed Highfields' residential programs for more than two decades. Groty said Abdullah retired earlier this month.

Contact Stacey Range at 377-1157 or srange@lsj.com.

WAYNE COUNTY

Cause of illness elusive at Brownstown Twp. day care

May 17, 2006

BY NAOMI R. PATTON
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Tests have been unable to pinpoint what made 23 children ill at a Brownstown Township day care center.

The Wayne County Department of Health and Human Services conducted air and water quality tests earlier this month at the Dawn to Dusk Child Care Center on Telegraph. Test results eliminated gases like carbon monoxide and hydrogen sulfide and the presence of chloroform in the day care's drinking water as the source of the symptoms, said Joyce Brown-Williams, a department spokeswoman.

Twenty-three children at the center, including the owner's children, complained of severe nausea and vomiting on April 24.

The owner, Keta Washington-Bynum, is waiting for independent test results, said Kendell Shipp-Lott, her attorney. She voluntarily closed the facility April 30 and will keep it closed until it is deemed safe.

All of the children were treated at area hospitals and released, but Mike Hogan, 34, of Taylor said last week that his youngest son, Jesse, 3, has been taking blood pressure medication since he was released from the University of Michigan Hospital on May 10.

"Doctors can't explain the vomiting or diarrhea," Hogan said. His two other sons, 6-year-old Cody and 5-year-old Dennis, also suffered from similar symptoms but recovered.

However, carbon monoxide was found in Dennis' bloodstream, Hogan said.

Hogan said that he and other parents had their homes tested to rule out toxins there. The results, he said, were negative.

Washington-Bynum reportedly found flooding and smelled a foul odor in the facility a week before Dawn to Dusk opened Nov. 29. Her former attorney, Gary Fields, said it might have come from an adjacent business that poured something down its drains, causing a backup affecting the center.

"We would go back to her," Hogan said, "but not that building."

Hogan's attorney, Debra Pospiech, said Tuesday she's also trying to conduct independent testing at the center.

"There's still a lot up in the air ... a lot of questions," she said.

Contact NAOMI R. PATTON at 248-351-3689 or patton@freepress.com

Church to give away food

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

FLINT TOWNSHIP

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

By George Jaksa

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Life Christian Church, 6325 Calkins Road, will give away food 1-4 p.m. Saturday from a van provided by Eastern Michigan Food Bank.

Recipients are asked to bring a box or bag to pick up the free supplies. The giveaway is sponsored by New Life Church and Crossover, Downtown Outreach Ministry.

Economists predict continued job loss in Michigan

May 17, 2006

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Economists on Wednesday reiterated that Michigan will continue to slowly lose jobs in 2006 and 2007, a factor that could limit the growth of state revenues that pay for a variety of government services.

University of Michigan economists projected that Michigan's unemployment rate, third-highest in the nation at 6.8 percent in March, isn't likely to get better in the short term primarily because of the auto industry's woes. They estimate the average jobless rate could be 6.7 percent this year and 7.1 percent in 2007.

Leaders of the House and Senate Fiscal agencies, together with the state treasurer, made minor adjustments to their revenue projections Wednesday for the current fiscal year and the one that starts Oct. 1. It was the first revenue estimating conference Robert Kleine attended as state treasurer.

Economists expect state government could bring in slightly more money overall than they thought at a similar conference in January, helping the general fund. But revenue for K-12 schools may not increase as much as their January estimates for this fiscal year and next.

Gasoline prices and uncertainty in the auto industry are among the factors that could change Michigan's economic forecast.

The projected job loss, while relatively small overall, is expected to continue to be felt the most in the manufacturing sector.

On the Net:

House Fiscal Agency: <http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

Senate Fiscal Agency: <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa>

Michigan Department of Treasury: <http://www.michigan.gov/treasury>